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SUBJECT: CANADIAN EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DEMOCRATIZATION ABROAD

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11. (SBU) Summary: The government of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper has taken a middle course between the large expansion of democratization capacity that a Parliamentary committee recommended in July 2007 and the ad hoc approach it had been following before then. Canada is justifiably cautious about taking on any major new commitments while it is so heavily engaged in Afghanistan and while the Conservatives remain in minority status in the House of Commons, but the government has made supporting freedom and democracy a key priority. It is now implementing several new approaches, including better coordination of Canadian organizations involved in democratization, more systematic research and analysis, and a forthcoming policy statement. It continues to support the alphabet soup of democratization programs -- the CD, PDG, and APDP. A recent trip to Pakistan by representatives of the government-supported but independent Democracy Council highlighted a new approach to democratization that combines for the first time direct work with parties in the midst of a political process. Canada continues to welcome its exchanges with State on promoting democratization overseas. End Summary.

PARLIAMENT URGES NEW APPROACHES TO DEMOCRATIZATION

12. (SBU) On July 11, 2007 the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade after extensive hearings tabled a report entitled "Advancing Canada's role in International Support for Democratic Development" (reftel). The Committee recommended a number of new approaches to supporting democracy abroad, including a new research center and a political party institute (along the lines of the Dutch Institute for Multiparty Democracy) to help channel the personnel and experience of Canadian political parties into overseas democracy promotion. The most ambitious recommendation was for the creation of a new independent institute -- the "Canada Foundation for International Democratic Development" -- that would have the mandate to develop and deliver programs in the field. Its model would be the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy -- and the Committee called for generous multi-year funding.

THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

13. (SBU) The Government responded to the report on November 2, 2007 with a white paper entitled "A New Focus on Democracy Support." The government declined to support a NED-style

organization, but explicitly confirmed that "supporting freedom and democracy is a key priority of the Government of Canada," while proposing new measures, including:

- preparation of a "Whole-of-Government" policy statement on "Democracy Support" by May 2, 2008;
- establishment of a Canadian research program on democracy support and a "Democracy Partners Research and Study Program," as well as comprehensive country-level governance assessments to inform major development programs;
- improved coordination of Canadian organizations, including support for the expansion and formalization of Canada's government-funded but independent "Democracy Council" (which includes representatives from the International Development Research Council, Elections Canada, the Montreal-based NGO "Rights and Democracy," the Parliamentary Centre, the Forum of Federations, and the National Judicial Institute), as well as other non-government organizations active in democracy support;
- continuation of an annual "Democracy Dialogue;" and,
- a new "Democratic Transitions Fund" for diplomatic efforts in support of democracy.

CHARTING NEW COURSES...

14. (U) The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's (DFAIT) Global Peace and Security Fund subsequently financed a conference in late February organized by the Queen's University Centre for the Study of Democracy on "Creating Democratic Value: Evaluating Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad." It brought together a group of global experts to begin to set the parameters for evaluating

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democratization programs, and included a presentation by poloff.

15. (U) The Democracy Council in March sent three of its members plus one consultant on a mission to Pakistan to determine what programs the Council might develop to help with Pakistan's democratic transition. This was the first time it had sent a mission of this kind to the field in its two year existence, and the first time to offer support to foreign political parties.

16. (U) The DFAIT-sponsored "Democracy Dialogue" brings together an international audience each year to focus on key themes in democratization. The February 2008 Dialogue (which poloff attended as the sole foreign diplomat) focused on "Canadian Approaches to Democracy Support in Latin America," with participation by former Vice President of Guatemala Eduardo Stein and OAS Undersecretary for Political Affairs Dante Caputo.

17. (U) Canada's Treasury Board has now vetted the new "Democratic Transitions Fund," which will have multi-year money that DFAIT -- rather than the more development-oriented Canadian International Development Agency -- will manage. It will begin to support diplomatic efforts at democratization. CIDA will separately by the end of 2008 begin to publish a new "Annual Report on Development Results" as well as a new "Annual Report on Democracy Spending" to provide greater clarity to the government's international democratization efforts.

...WHILE STAYING IN THE GAME

18. (SBU) According to DFAIT Democracy Unit officials, Canada continues to try to focus its limited resources where it can

do the most good in the democratization arena, and wants to remain engaged in a number of areas without diverting attention from its highest priorities. Other ongoing democratization efforts include:

-- Community of Democracies (CD): Canada remains fully supportive of the CD, but is not particularly active in the organization between ministerials. Its key contribution to date has been primary funding for "A Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support," a project headed by retired Canadian Ambassador Jeremy Kinsman. The publication is a unique contribution to the literature of democratization, putting together a "diplomat's toolbox," including case studies;

-- Partnership for Democratic Governance (PDG): Canada is currently the Vice Chair of the Executive Committee and has committed even more funding and personnel for the PDG than the CD. Its current commitment is C\$3 million (approximately US\$3 million) over a three year period. DFAIT has not had any response to date from its missions in Latin America to a request for proposals for PDG projects, but plans to support this initial effort to create projects in the field;

-- Asia Pacific Democratic Partnership (APDP): as a founding member, Canada takes the APDP seriously and will continue to support it with funding and diplomatic effort. Canada plans soon to respond to our most recent proposals, but believes that it would be best to conduct a "soft launch" in June 2008 by sending out an observer mission to Mongolia, with a "hard launch" by November 2008, when APDP would send an observer mission for the U.S. elections;

-- UN Democracy Fund: Canada does not so far support the UNDF because it has does not want to spread its efforts and funding too thin. Canadian officials have nonetheless met with the head of the UNDF and are assessing whether it would provide a niche to meet certain objectives;

-- Bali Democracy Forum: Canada has not yet taken an official position on the Bali Forum, but considers some of its work complementary to Canadian objectives. Canada remains concerned that the Bali Forum may be too geographically and functionally inclusive to be effective, but Canadian interests in Asia are likely too great not eventually to support such a noteworthy Asian organization;

-- DFAIT is now contemplating the posting of regional democratization officers in some of its Embassies abroad as a way better to manage DFAIT-funded programs and conduct outreach.

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19. (SBU) Comment: Canada continues to struggle with how best to institutionalize its own approach to democratization abroad. DFAIT officials have expressed admiration for the U.S. "Advance Democracy Act" and the large role it gives to the State Department to deliver democratization programs. Canada will continue to welcome exchanges with us on democratization, including contacts in Washington, Ottawa, and key posts in the field.

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